THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1999-2000, SAIL has exported 53.3 thousand tonnes and 26.2 thousand tonnes of Plates to Taiwan and Mexico respectively.

(c) Year-wise export of steel plates by SAIL to different countries during the last 5 years is as follows :

('000 tonnes)

Year	Quantity
1995-96	161.7
1996-97	299.0
1997-98	359.6
1998-99	285.9
1999-2000	325.8 (Prov.)

(d) The target for export of mild steel plates during 2000-2001 is 1,25,000 MT.

Profits of SAIL

2561. SHRI SANTOSH BARGRODIA : Will the MINISTER OF STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the profits of SAIL have scaled down over the years;

(b) whether the company needs to focus on its core activities to remain competitive in the market; and

(c) if so, what precautions could be taken for non-occurence of such activities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir,

(c) Government has approved a package for the financial and business restructuring of SAIL which *inter-alia* includes :

(i) Waiver of loans from Steel Development Fund and the Government of India.

(ii) Provision of Government guarantee to raise loans to finance Voluntary Retirement Scheme and repayment of past obligations.

(iii) Divestment of non-Core Units while protecting jobs of existing employees.

(iv) Conversion of HSCO, a sick and loss making subsidiary, to a joint venture company with minority shareholding for SAIL.

SAIL is also implementing the following steps to improve its financial performance.

(i) A reduction in operational costs by reducing input costs, reducing consumption of raw materials and other inputs and by increasing operating efficiencies;

(ii) Improvement in techno-economic parameters such as fuel and power consumption;

(iii) Increased recovery for services/facilities;

(iv) Right sizing manpower through a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS);

(v) Assets restructuring;

(vi) Disposal of idle assets; and

(vii) Financial restructuring.

By implementing the above measures, it is expected that SAIL will return to profitability in next two to three years.

Decision with regard to VSP

2562. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the MINISTER OF STEEL be pleased to refer to reply to Starred Question 246 given in the Rajya Sabha on 13th March, 2000 and state :

(a) whether any final decision has been taken with regard to revival of Visakha Steel Plant;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when a final decision is likely to be arrived at in the matter?